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LETTER DATED 14 DECEMBER 1992 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to refer to the letter dated 10 December 1992 from Mr. Pierce S. Corden, Deputy Executive Chairman of the Special Commission, addressed to you. Mr Corden's letter contains a number of remarks and items of information some of which are inaccurate and others untrue. In clarification, I should like to communicate to you hereunder the true facts and realities.

1. On 8 December 1992, Mr. Johan Santesson, Chief Inspector with the UNSCOM 47 inspection team, asked to meet with Lieutenant-General Amer Muhammad Rashid, Director of the Military Industrial Corporation. In the course of the interview, Mr. Santesson stated that he had sought the meeting in order to convey to General Amer the Special Commission's wish that the Iraqi side should furnish it with "independent" evidence to refute the charges reaching the Commission relating to Iraq's weapons programmes. In reply, General Amer stated that the Special Commission's request was most vague and imprecise and that it would place the Iraqi side under constant indictment while the Commission would not present evidence to substantiate any charges but would require the Iraqi side to produce evidence of its innocence. General Amer stated to Mr. Santesson that such a request made in such a form had no sound and practical basis and was, moreover, contrary to legal and ethical norms. Accusations continued to be brought against Iraq in a manner that required no evidence or grounds and inspection activities continued on the basis of charges that had no foundation with the objective of perpetuating the climate of suspicion being used to prolong the blanket embargo that had been imposed on Iraq together with all the tribulations it was bringing down upon the Iraqi people.

Before his meeting with General Amer, Mr. Santesson had made statements to representatives of the world press in Baghdad in which he had expressed unwarranted contempt for the Iraqi technical personnel that had conducted the technical discussions with the UNSCOM 47 inspection team. This is not the first time members of the Special Commission's inspection teams have behaved

in a coarse and unacceptable manner that is out of place in relation to the technical tasks entrusted to them.

2. The Iraqi side has been surprised by the inaccuracy of many of the matters reported concerning General Amer's meeting with Mr. Santesson, and we consider it our duty to apprise you and the members of the Security Council of the facts concerning what it was the General said to Mr. Santesson in the course of his meeting with him.

(a) General Amer affirmed that the Iraqi side was candid and frank in its dealings with the Special Commission with regard to the implementation of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and that this was so despite the fact that we have been noting for some time that there is a malevolent political game in progress behind which are certain influential parties in the Security Council aiming to prolong the duration of inspections in order to maintain the embargo imposed on Iraq. General Amer then reaffirmed that, for the implementation of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), Iraq was always ready to cooperate in resolving any lack of clarity in any of the technical aspects relating to the resolution in question.

(b) General Amer said that it had emerged from the discussions held by the most recent inspection team that most of the questions raised by the team were recurring questions that had already been answered. It was evident that the inspection team was reiterating requests for old information that the Iraqi side had already provided, and that it was as if inspection had begun again from zero. General Amer pointed out that this procedure was bewildering and useless and that it could be exploited by the parties that had evil intentions towards Iraq in order to prolong the pain and suffering being caused by the maintenance of the blanket embargo. For these reasons, General Amer told Mr. Santesson that the Iraqi side would no longer respond to recurring questions or to trivial questions that bore no relation to resolution 687 (1991). General Amer affirmed, however, that the Iraqi side was obliged to follow the instructions of Iraq's political leadership, which stipulated that full cooperation and support be given if the questions submitted and the information requested were relevant to resolution 687 (1991). General Amer stated to Mr. Santesson that the extent of the game in which the Special Commission was indulging had become clear and recognized, because Iraq had fulfilled the requirements of resolution 687 (1991), particularly its substantive requirements, and had responded to many questions and inquiries that had had no relation to resolution 687 but had not obtained anything of benefit to the Iraqi people in return.

(c) General Amer asked why the statement made by the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission to the Security Council on 23 November 1992 had contained no reference to the positive results obtained by the UNSCOM 45 inspection team, which had closed the file on ballistic missiles. The team's report, a copy of which had been sent to the Security Council, had been appropriately positive inasmuch as it had commended the cooperation of the Iraqi side in the performance of its task, during which it had realized how great an effort the Iraqi side had made to secure all the information

requested despite the fact that most of it bore no relation to resolution 687 (1991). General Amer said that the Iraqi side had hoped that the success of the mission of the UNSCOM 45 team would be the end of the game based on questions and inquiries, some of which were trivial and bore no direct relation to the objectives and requirements of resolution 687 (1991), but that had not happened. The feeling had been engendered on the Iraqi side that it had been deceived, because the statement made by Mr. Rolf Ekéus to the Security Council had neglected to make reference to the absolute openness it had evinced. Iraq had thus obtained no positive return to demonstrate its cooperative attitude, despite the great and wide-ranging cooperation it had shown in all fields and even with respect to matters that bore no relation to resolution 687 (1991).

(d) When General Amer indicated that he would punish anyone on the Iraqi side who undertook to provide the inspection teams with information that bore no relation to resolution 687 (1991) his intention had been clear, and it was the need to stop the inspection teams from using the technique of harassing Iraqi technicians with questions and inquiries that bore no relation whatever to the implementation of resolution 687 (1991).

(e) General Amer stressed, explicitly and out of a sense of responsibility, that he was conveying to Mr. Santesson the feelings of anger and great distress felt by all Iraqi citizens towards the inspection teams so that the Special Commission might perhaps understand the feelings of the Iraqi people on the maintenance of the embargo under the pretext that those teams were continuing to operate, so that further offence to the sentiments of Iraqi citizens might perhaps be avoided and so that the focus might perhaps be placed, in an objective spirit, on a serious endeavour in the framework of resolution 687 (1991) to bring an end to the suffering of the Iraqi people.

(f) General Amer stated to Mr. Santesson that whenever detailed and complete information was provided as requested by the Special Commission the Commission would come back once more and present new requests under the pressure of the fabrications, accusations and suspicions raised by the parties hostile to Iraq. Accordingly, the prevailing belief was that the inspection teams, in reality and regardless of the intentions of their members, had come to serve political and intelligence-related goals and interests that bore no relation to Security Council resolutions and that originated with parties hostile to Iraq. At this point, General Amer issued an invitation to Santesson to visit any hospital in Baghdad to witness for himself the suffering of Iraq's children and to observe the escalating mortality rates among them because of the unavailability of even the most elementary medical supplies and infant food.

(g) General Amer indicated that he felt that many requests to carry out aerial inspection and reconnaissance by the Special Commission's helicopter team were made for purposes of collecting intelligence information on Iraq that bore no relation to resolution 687 (1991). If that were not so, how were we to interpret the fact that these aircraft had carried out reconnaissance of civilian sites, such as the elementary school over which the UNSCOM 47 team

had flown in the Wasit Governorate, or the fact that they had in the past carried out reconnaissance of private farms, the property of citizens and private resort sites? With regard to the request submitted for flights over civilian residential neighbourhoods in Baghdad, General Amer said that the Iraqi side was requesting the Special Commission to adhere to the agreement reached with the aerial inspection team with regard to the boundaries of the City of Baghdad. The request for flights over the city was therefore unwarranted and provocative, and sites could be investigated by ground-based inspection teams.

On a number of occasions in the course of the meeting, General Amer affirmed Iraq's desire to cooperate with the Special Commission for the implementation of resolution 687 (1991). It saddens him that reports of the meeting ignored this affirmation in a manner that is cause for astonishment. The objective of such reports is, as it seems to us, to distort the position of the Iraqi side and to do it a disservice. General Amer again affirmed to Mr. Santesson that Iraq's position with respect to the implementation of resolution 687 (1991) was constant, namely that proclaimed by Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Tariq Aziz in his meeting with the Security Council on 23 and 24 November 1992.

General Amer pointed out that the inspection teams had seen everything and verified everything relating to resolution 687 (1991). All weapons and equipment prohibited by resolution 687 (1991) had been destroyed. That could not have been done without the full assistance and cooperation of the Iraqi side, and the Iraqi side had been expecting the Special Commission to fulfil its own obligations by recommending to the Security Council that the economic embargo against Iraq be lifted in accordance with paragraph 22 of resolution 687 (1991). Regrettably, however, nothing of the kind had happened.

The foregoing represents the substance and the details of General Amer Muhammad Rashid's talk with Mr. Johan Santesson. No doubt you can observe the great difference between the facts and realities we have communicated to you in this letter and the selective manner in which they are presented in the letter of Mr. Corden, with his detachment of short citations removed from the context in which General Amer spoke.

We request you to bring the contents of this letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative